VOL 12 No 8 AUGUST 1982

STANFORD DOCUMENT DUPLICATE

SURVEY of Current Affairs

Government and Administration

Northern Ireland Assembly Election 263
Recent Legislation 263

External Affairs and Defence

Britain and the Commonwealth 265
Shorter Notes
Siberian Gas Pipeline 266; Suspension of Commercial Whaling 266; British Council 266; The Maldives 267

Economic and Scientific Affairs

Employment Measures 268
Open Tech Programme 269
Telecommunications Policy 271
Standards 272
Shorter Notes
Abolition of Hire Purchase Controls 274; Local Government Expenditure 274; National Savings 275; Water Industry Reorganisation 275; Computer-aided Design and Test Equipment 276; Microelectronics in Education 276; Radioactive Waste Management 277

Documentation 278

STANFORD DOCUMENT DUPLICATE

Published for British Information Services by
Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London
Annual subscription including postage and index £20.42

The *Survey of Current Affairs* is produced for British Information Services overseas, but in response to requests has also been made available in Britain. Subscription and distribution inquiries should be addressed to Her Majesty's Stationery Office, P.O. Box 569, London SE1 9NH, and editorial inquiries to Reference Division, Central Office of Information, Hercules Road, Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7DU. Although the material is Crown Copyright, it may be reproduced without special permission.
Other documents produced by Reference Division if not on sale through Her Majesty's Stationery Office, may be obtained direct from Reference Division on payment of a small charge.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Northern Ireland Assembly Election

Elections to the new Northern Ireland Assembly are to be held on 20 October, and Members' salaries have been announced.

Following the successful passage through Parliament of the Northern Ireland Act 1982, which provides for the restoration of devolved government to the Province (see pp 101-2 and 176-8), the date of the election to the new Northern Ireland Assembly to be set up under the Act has been fixed for Wednesday, 20 October 1982. The election will be held on the basis of the existing 12 parliamentary constituencies and under the single transferable vote system of proportional representation.[1] None of the Northern Ireland parties has said that it will not contest the election.

Speaking on 26 July in a House of Commons debate on the Order in Council appointing the date of the election (*Hansard*, Vol 28, No 162, cols 878-96), the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mr James Prior, said that the Act would allow the Assembly immediately to become involved both in scrutinising the day-to-day government of the Province and with the urgent problems that faced Northern Ireland.

Another Order in Council prescribing the salaries and allowances for Members of the Assembly was made on 30 July. Assembly Members will receive a salary of £8,700 a year, which is three-fifths of the annual salary paid to Members of the House of Commons. Once the departmental committees of the Assembly have been set up (see p 102) their Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen, when appointed, will be paid £2,900 and £1,450 respectively a year in addition to their salary of £8,700. The presiding officer of the Assembly will receive a salary of £18,195 a year. As in the case of MPs at Westminster, a secretarial allowance and travelling expenses will be paid.

[1]The proportional representation system of voting was introduced in Northern Ireland for elections to the Assembly set up in 1973 in order to reflect as accurately as possible the wishes of the electorate. Parliamentary elections throughout the United Kingdom are conducted by the simple majority system.

Recent Legislation

The public Acts of Parliament passed between May and the end of July when the summer adjournment began are listed below. Ten Acts were introduced by private members; these are indicated by asterisks.

Aviation Security Act 1982. Consolidates certain enactments relating to aviation security. Royal Assent: 23.7.82. Ch 36, ISBN 0 10 543682 8, HMSO, £4·20.

Appropriation Act 1982. Prescribes how expenditure is to be appropriated in order to finance specified public services. Royal Assent: 30.7.82. Ch 40, ISBN 0 10 544082 5, HMSO, £4·20.

**Children's Homes Act 1982.* Provides for the registration, inspection and running of certain local authority children's homes. Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 20, ISBN 0 10 542082 4, HMSO, £1·65.

**Cinematograph (Amendment) Act 1982.* Extends and amends the Cinematograph Acts 1909 and 1952. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 33, ISBN 0 10 543382 9, HMSO, £2·10.

Civil Aviation Act 1982. Consolidates certain enactments relating to civil aviation. Royal Assent: 27.5.82. Ch 16, ISBN 0 10 541682 7, HMSO, £7·75.

Civil Jurisdiction and Judgments Act 1982. Makes further provision for the jurisdiction of courts and tribunals in the United Kingdom and certain other territories, and modifies certain provisions relating to legal aid. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 27, ISBN 0 10 542782 9, HMSO, £6·05.

**Copyright Act 1956 Amendment Act 1982.* Amends section 21 of the Copyright Act 1956 so as to make it an offence to be in possession of an infringing copy in the course of trade. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 35, ISBN 0 10 543582 1, HMSO, 35p.

**Deer (Amendment) Scotland Act 1982.* Amends 1959 legislation regarding the control of deer and

the unlawful taking, killing and injury of deer. Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 19, ISBN 0 10 541982 6, HMSO, £2·25.

Derelict Land Act 1982. Repeals and re-enacts, with amendments, the existing provisions relating to grants for reclaiming derelict land in England and Wales and to the powers of authorities in Wales to deal with derelict land. Royal Assent: 30.7.82. Ch 42, ISBN 0 10 544282 8, HMSO, £1·65.

Finance Act 1982. Gives effect to the Budget proposals (see pp 115-23). Royal Assent: 30.7.82.[1]

**Firearms Act 1982.* Applies the provisions of the Firearms Act 1968 to imitation firearms which are readily convertible into firearms. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 31, ISBN 0 10 543182 6, HMSO, 75p.

**Food and Drugs (Amendment) Act 1982.* Amends and strengthens the food regulations and their parent legislation, the Food and Drugs Act 1955. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 26, ISBN 0 10 542682 2, HMSO, £1·25.

**Forfeiture Act 1982.* Amends the Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 to provide for relief from forefeiture of inheritance and other rights by convicted people. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 34, ISBN 0 10 543482 5, HMSO, £1·25.

**Gaming (Amendment) Act 1982.* Amends aspects of the Gaming Acts 1885 and 1968. Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 22, ISBN 0 10 542282 7, HMSO, £1·25.

Harbours (Scotland) Act 1982. Provides for the establishment of harbour trusts in Scotland. Royal Assent: 27.5.82. Ch 17, ISBN 0 10 541782 3, HMSO, 35p.

Industry Act 1982. Raises the limits imposed on the Secretary of State's financial assistance to industry under section 8 (7) and (8) of the Industry Act 1972. Royal Assent: 27.5.82. Ch 18, ISBN 0 10 541882 X, HMSO, 35p.

Iron and Steel Act 1982. Consolidates all provisions relating to the British Steel Corporation. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 25, ISBN 0 10 542582 6, HMSO, £3·80.

Local Government and Planning (Scotland) Act 1982. Makes further provisions for local government and planning in Scotland, including the abolition of certain powers of entry and certain advisory committees; also amends the Tenants' Rights Etc (Scotland) Act 1980. Royal Assent: 30.7.82. Ch 43, ISBN 0 10 544382 4, HMSO, £5·65.

Local Government Finance (No 2) Act 1982 (see pp 50-2). Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 32, ISBN 0 10 543282 2, HMSO, £3·80.

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. Gives power to local authorities to control sex shops by means of a licensing scheme; makes further provision for the control of refreshment premises and for consultation between local authorities in England and Wales and fire authorities over fire precautions for building and caravan sites; repeals the Theatrical Employers Registration Acts 1925 and 1928; makes further provisions for enforcing by-laws; amends section 163(1) of the Highways Act 1980. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 30, ISBN 0 10 543082 X, HMSO, £6·05.

Merchant Shipping (Liner Conferences) Act 1982. Implements in the United Kingdom the Convention on a Code of Conduct for Liner Conferences signed at Geneva in 1974. Royal Assent: 23.7.82. Ch 37, ISBN 0 10 543782 4, HMSO, £4·20.

Northern Ireland Act 1982 (see pp 176-8). Royal Assent: 23.7.82. Ch 38, ISBN 0 10 543882 0, HMSO, £2·10.

Oil and Gas (Enterprise) Act 1982 (see pp 46-7). Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 23, ISBN 0 10 542382 3, HMSO, £4·80.

**Planning Inquiries (Attendance of Public) Act 1982.* Makes provision for evidence at planning inquiries in England and Wales held under the Town and Country Planning Act 1971 to be heard in public (with certain exceptions). Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 21, ISBN 0 10 542182 0, HMSO, 35p.

Social Security and Housing Benefits Act 1982. Makes provision for the payment of statutory sick pay by employers; transfers full responsibility for payment of housing benefits to local authorities; and amends the law relating to social security and war pensions. Royal Assent: 28.6.82. Ch 24, ISBN 0 10 542482 X, HMSO, £4·80.

Stock Transfer Act 1982. Amends the law relating to the transfer, registration and redemption of securities. Royal Assent: 30.7.82. Ch 41, ISBN 0 10 544182 1, HMSO, £1·65.

**Supply of Goods and Services Act 1982.* Clarifies the implied legal rights and obligations of traders and their customers over the hiring of goods and the supply of services. Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 29, ISBN 0 10 542982 1, HMSO, £2·10.

Taking of Hostages Act 1982 (see footnote p 76). Royal Assent: 13.7.82. Ch 28, ISBN 0 10 542882 5, HMSO, 75p.

[1]Publication details of this Act were not available at the time of going to press.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE

Britain and the Commonwealth

In an address to the Conservative Commonwealth and Overseas Council on 13 July the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary, Mr Francis Pym, reaffirmed Britain's faith in the Commonwealth and pointed to its unique role in international affairs. The Republic of Maldives became the forty-seventh member of the Commonwealth on 9 July (see p 267).

Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's Speech

Opening his address with a reference to the Falklands dispute, Mr Pym paid tribute to the British forces' successful military operation, the aim of which had been 'not . . . to impose colonial rule on a distant outpost, but to allow to the people of the Falkland Islands the same rights as those which have been enjoyed and exercised by the many peoples which make up today's Commonwealth'. The Commonwealth was 'a living monument to the exercise of self-determination by its peoples' and had 'placed its weight quietly but firmly on the side of the rule of law'. The peoples of the Commonwealth, numbering a quarter of the world's population and three out of every ten members of the United Nations, showed the absurdity of the charge of colonialism, having decided voluntarily to maintain a unique association based on principles of freedom and democracy.

Mr Pym said that the Commonwealth included some of the world's largest and most populous countries as well as many of the smallest. Although every major race and great religion, every stage of economic development, and every shade of the political spectrum was represented, the members of this disparate grouping had much in common that was unique to the Commonwealth, including shared historical experience. The transformation of the British Empire into a multitude of fully independent sovereign states had resulted in 'a special kind of friendship', strengthened by the possession of many common institutions such as legal, judicial and educational systems and professional organisations which showed a 'certain family likeness' that transcended local differences of detail.

Turning to the role of the Commonwealth as a political force, a role which he believed could be further developed, Mr Pym noted that although the Commonwealth stood outside the regional organisations and economic and political groupings which were inevitably playing an increasingly significant part in the conduct of international affairs, it was linked to all of them through the participation of individual Commonwealth countries in the Non-Aligned Movement, the Association of South East Asian Nations, the Organisation of American States, the Organisation of African Unity, the European Community and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. British membership of the Commonwealth and the European Community, for example, provided 'an invaluable link between them to the benefit of both' which belied fears expressed at the time of Britain's joining the Community that its Commonwealth links would be weakened. Another instance was the Lomé Convention[1] involving 23 members of the Commonwealth – an example of two very different political organisations with a great deal to offer each other. Britain was determined to make full use of the opportunity to further this process.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary pointed out that the Commonwealth was not designed as an organisation to maintain international peace and security, nor did it have primary responsibility for dealing with pressing world problems in the economic and social fields. It did not seek to assert the responsibilities of the United Nations and its agencies, nor was it a regional organisation of the kind envisaged in the United Nations Charter. The Commonwealth was 'an international organisation with a distinct personality and special attributes' and made a unique contribution to international affairs. Taking the settlement in Zimbabwe as an example, Mr Pym said that Britain was 'well aware how very much harder it would have been to reach a settlement . . . without the prior agreement reached at the Commonwealth heads of Government meeting in Lusaka and the support of the Commonwealth thereafter'. The Commonwealth Monitoring Force and the Commonwealth Observer Group had played an invaluable role in the run-up to independence (see pp 364-70, 1979; 67-8, 1980). A smaller group in Uganda had monitored the elections there in December 1980 and a Commonwealth team was currently training elements of

[1]The Lomé Convention is a comprehensive aid and trade agreement between the European Community and some 60 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, providing duty-free access to the Community for a wide range of goods and tropical products (see pp 51-3, 1975). The Second Lomé Convention (see p 322, 1979) expanded the agreement.

Uganda's armed forces at the request of the Ugandan Government as a contribution to internal stability.

Commenting on the moral authority of the Commonwealth, which could be drawn upon to good effect to strengthen the rule of law, Mr Pym doubted whether Belize could have been brought to independence so successfully without the support the Commonwealth was able to muster at the United Nations. Similar support might be needed in the future to help ensure that the differences between Belize and Guatemala (see pp 92, 215, 297, 1981), and indeed those between Guyana and Venezuela,[1] were resolved by peaceful means in accordance with international law.

Paying tribute to the Commonwealth's contribution to the North-South dialogue, which had demonstrated once again the ability of its members to talk constructively and to listen to each other even where they might disagree, Mr Pym recalled that the Secretary-General, Mr Shridath Ramphal, had been a member of the Brandt Commission (see pp 101-5, 209-12, 1980), and that one-third of the participants at the International Meeting for Co-operation and Development at Cancun in Mexico in October 1981 (see pp 329-30, 1981) had gone there from the Commonwealth heads of Government meeting in Melbourne (see pp 295-300, 1981).

In conclusion, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary emphasised that Britain had always given a special place to its relations with its Commonwealth partners. Some 70 per cent of British bilateral aid went to Commonwealth countries, ministers of the present Government had made 75 visits to 30 Commonwealth countries in the three years it had been in office, and the Government was continuing to play a major part in supporting the activities of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Mr Pym added: 'A British foreign policy which contributes to the Commonwealth and which works with our Commonwealth partners will be a more effective foreign policy. It will contribute better to the causes of peace and friendship in the world, from which we in Britain have as much to gain as anyone. That is why we value our membership so much.'

Shorter Notes

SIBERIAN GAS PIPELINE

In a brief statement to the House of Lords on 2 August, the Secretary of State for Trade, Lord Cockfield, described the United States' export embargo regarding companies under contract to provide equipment for the Siberian gas pipeline between the Soviet Union and Western Europe (see p 236) as 'an unacceptable extension of American extra-territorial jurisdiction'. Expressing the hope that a solution could be found to the problem, Lord Cockfield said that in defence of British trading interests he had issued directions under the Protection of Trading Interests Act 1980 to certain companies forbidding them to comply with the embargo. The companies affected are John Brown Engineering Limited, Smith International (North Sea) Limited, Baker Oil Tools (United Kingdom) Limited, and AAF Limited, all of which entered into contracts prior to the announcement of the embargo. Lord Cockfield pointed out that Britain did not wish to escalate the dispute and he hoped that the moderation of the Government's approach would persuade the United States administration to think again. In the absence of a mutually acceptable solution Britain was determined to defend its own national interests.

Source: *Hansard* (*HL*), Vol 434, No 137, cols 544-8.

SUSPENSION OF COMMERCIAL WHALING

Meeting in Brighton, the International Whaling Commission decided on 23 July to suspend all commercial whaling from the 1985-86 pelagic season and the 1986 coastal season. In a parliamentary reply on 29 July Earl Ferrers, Minister of State at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said that the Government greatly welcomed the outcome of the Commission's deliberations: 'The decision, which was supported by the United Kingdom delegation, should lift the threat of extinction from some important stocks of whales. The catch limits, which are set for the coming seasons, also show a significant reduction from those which were set last year. This should help to facilitate the orderly run-down of the whaling industries in the countries concerned. The Government hope that the decision ... will now be implemented in the normal way.'

Source: *Hansard* (*HL*), Vol 434, No 135, written answers, col 442.

BRITISH COUNCIL

The annual report of the British Council, published in July 1982,[1] shows that in 1981-82 the Council spent £147·1 million in promoting knowledge of Britain and the English language overseas, in developing cultural relations with other countries, and in assisting educational advancement in the developing world. About 75 per cent of the funds was provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and its Overseas Development Administration, the remainder coming from Council earnings and agency fees. The Council defines its primary aim as the promotion of 'an enduring understanding and appreciation of Britain in other countries

[1]Some five-eighths of Guyana, the area west of the Essequibo River, is the subject of a long-standing territorial claim by Venezuela.

[1]*The British Council Annual Report 1981-82*. HMSO/British Council, £1·70. ISBN 0 901618 79 9.

through cultural, educational and technical co-operation'.

During the year the Council reaffirmed the fundamental importance in its work of exchanges of people between Britain and other countries, noting that the traditional range of academic subjects covered had now extended to include a broad spectrum of activity in engineering and technology, in public administration and management and in technical and industrial training. A review of the use of computers and information technology had resulted in a reorganisation of the headquarters departments dealing with the technology, and a decision to devote significant additional resources to the exploitation of information technology for Council purposes, notably to reach a wider overseas audience with information about Britain.

An important achievement during the year was the completion of the incorporation into the Council of the Technical Education and Training Organisation for Overseas Countries and of the Inter-University Council (see p 14).

During the year the Council assisted 21,240 overseas students and visitors to come to Britain and nearly 3,000 British specialists in education and other subjects to work or undertake professional visits abroad. In addition, about 23,000 young people took part in youth exchange schemes. Over 263,000 students learned English with the direct or indirect help of the Council, which also arranged for 1,500 English language teachers and advisers to work overseas. Book issues by Council libraries in 1981-82 totalled 4·3 million from a library stock of 1·7 million, while 272 book exhibitions involving 77,000 books and 3,300 periodicals were held in 71 countries. In addition, £1·2 million was spent on book presentations to 805 institutions in 99 developing countries and 1·8 million text-books from the educational low-priced book series were sold in over 50 developing countries. British dance and drama organisations toured 58 countries, while music tours covered 68 countries and fine art exhibitions were held in 54 countries. Some 20,000 films were held in Council libraries overseas and 80 films were supplied for British Film Weeks abroad.

THE MALDIVES

On 9 July the Republic of Maldives became a member of the Commonwealth. Its President, Mr Maumoor Abdul Gayoom, is expected to attend the meeting of Commonwealth heads of Government of the Asia-Pacific region to be held in Fiji in October.

Situated in the Indian Ocean about 645 km (400 miles) south-west of Sri Lanka, the Republic of Maldives is the forty-seventh member of the Commonwealth and consists of a chain of 19 atolls comprising over 1,200 islands, about 200 of which are inhabited. The islands became a British protectorate in 1887, an arrangement that continued until the Maldives became independent in July 1965. The present Republic was established in 1968.

The Republic of Maldives is a special member of the Commonwealth with the right to participate in all functional meetings and activities, the only limitation being that it does not attend full meetings of heads of Government. The other special members are Nauru, Tuvalu, and St Vincent and the Grenadines.

ECONOMIC AND SCIENTIFIC AFFAIRS

Employment Measures

A number of measures to promote employment were announced on 27 July by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Geoffrey Howe, during a House of Commons debate on unemployment. The measures include: doubling of the number of enterprise zones, introduction of a new community programme of voluntary work and a scheme to encourage job-sharing.

Sir Geoffrey began his speech[1] by defending the Government's record on unemployment. There was, he said, 'no difference of opinion between both sides of the House on the grim tragedy portrayed by today's unemployment figures'.[2] He pointed out, however, that the problem of rising unemployment was not new, and that the level had been rising steadily during the past two decades. Nevertheless, unemployment in Britain was now rising more slowly than in many other countries. 'Unemployment for the year ending May rose by about 15 per cent. In Germany and Canada the figure rose by 40 per cent.' It was the task of the House of Commons to agree on the basic causes, the most obvious and fundamental of which was the decline of industrial competitiveness. If Britain was to get people back to work it was crucial to recapture markets that had been lost at home and overseas.

The conditions confronting Britain were more urgent than in many other countries, but they were certainly not confined to this country. Rising unemployment was being experienced in virtually every country in the industrialised world; Britain faced greater difficulties because of the longer period over which competitiveness had been lost compared with other countries. But, although the recovery taking place was uneven and frustratingly slow, industrial production in the three months to May was 3 per cent higher than in the spring of 1981. Manufacturing productivity, the key to further progress, was now 12 per cent higher than at the end of 1980, and cost competitiveness had improved by 10-15 per cent in the past 18 months. These facts demonstrated that, despite the difficulties, British management and workers were responding to the difficult circumstances that faced them.

The Government intended to help by continuing to pursue responsible monetary and fiscal policies and to hold down public sector borrowing to match that. All the monetary aggregates had been growing at rates well within or below the target brackets set out in the Budget statement (see pp 115-23). The growth of bank lending had been falling and the exchange rate had been firm. These circumstances had enabled the Government to secure a slow but steady fall in interest rates. Linked to the success in sustaining the fall in interest rates and equally relevant to the fight to check the rise in unemployment was the Government's solid and continuing success in the fight against inflation. The autumn 1981 forecast of 10 per cent inflation by the end of 1982 had gradually been revised downwards and there was good reason to hope that the figure of 7·5 per cent inflation would be reached by the end of this year.

It was his firm belief, the Chancellor said, that falling interest rates would help to boost demand and give help where it was most needed to companies and investment. Business and industry were about to start benefiting from the National Insurance surcharge cut (see p 118) which was designed to bring £640 million of direct help to business.

It was necessary to encourage change and enterprise, new business and the restoration of profit margins. For that reason the Government had swept away a whole range of controls, including those on prices, dividends, and office and industrial development. The Government had also removed exchange controls and hire purchase controls (see p 274).

The experiment with enterprise zones (see p 210) had been a considerable success, and the example was now being followed in the United States. The 11 zones already designated were, Sir Geoffrey said, 'achieving impressive results. A range of development is now under way, bringing new enterprise and much needed investment to old dockland areas such as the Clyde, to steel closure areas like Corby, and to other areas of physical decay. At Clydebank, for example, more than 200 firms have moved in – almost 50 of them new firms – with potential for more than 1,300 jobs. The private sector is grasping the opportunities and public authorities are supporting the initiative with enthusiasm'. The Government

[1] *Hansard*, Vol 28, No 62, cols 942-51.

[2] In July 1982 there were 3·2 million unemployed; on a seasonally adjusted basis this represented 12·3 per cent of all employees.

intended to designate another 11 zones – seven in England, two in Scotland and one each in Wales and Northern Ireland – with the same benefits as those zones already designated.[1]

Such measures were directed to the long-term purpose of improving the economic prospects for industry and so for jobs. The Government was also concerned to provide direct assistance on jobs for those out of work. A wide range of special employment and training measures were already under way, costing £1,500 million a year and helping about 500,000 people. The Government had accepted recommendations put forward by the Manpower Services Commission for the operation of a scheme which would bring together tasks of environmental improvement in local communities, or help for those in need, with those who were anxious to find work. The new community programme, providing opportunities for community work and voluntary service for those who had been unemployed for some time, would be introduced in October; it would bring together the existing community enterprise programme and the initiative proposed in the Budget speech (see pp 115-16) to provide a much larger number of opportunities at a relatively low unit cost. If the demand was there, this would provide up to 130,000 places for the long-term unemployed. Most of the places would be part-time and assistance would be given with training if required. The whole programme would continue for at least two years at a gross cost in a full year of about £575 million, including existing measures.

The Government had also decided to encourage the extension of part-time work more generally in the economy. The object would be to provide additional opportunities for productive jobs for unemployed people. The scheme, which would be open from the beginning of 1973 until the end of March 1984, would offer employers who split a full-time job into two part-time jobs a flat-rate grant designed to cover their additional costs during the first year and to provide some incentive. The grants would be payable only in cases where the splitting of a job resulted, directly or indirectly, in a reduction in the number of unemployed people claiming benefits.

Open Tech Programme

The Open Tech Programme, which aims to widen training opportunities for adults in technical and supervisory skills throughout Great Britain, was launched on 5 August by the Manpower Services Commission.

A report by the Open Tech Task Group,[2] putting forward proposals for the initial development of the Open Tech Programme, has been welcomed and endorsed by the Manpower Services Commission. The Commission is taking immediate steps to launch the programme along the lines recommended in the report, with the aim of having a number of projects commissioned by the end of 1982.

Proposals for a programme of 'open learning' at technician and related levels were originally advanced in a consultative document in 1981 (see p 180, 1981), and included in the Government's New Training Initiative (see p 21). The preface to the task group report suggests that the proposals were timely; they presented distinct possibilities of development and expansion and this was welcome against a background of retrenchment in education and training. An awareness of the need to improve the quality of manpower had also led to a realisation that more opportunities were necessary for adults, especially technicians and supervisors. The consultative document stimulated some 500 written responses from individuals and organisations. The task group was set up, drawing on a wide range of knowledge and experience among employers, trade unions and educationalists, to consider the responses and suggestions and to make detailed recommendations on the management and direction of the Open Tech Programme for its first four years of operation.

The Task Group Proposals

The task group sees the Open Tech Progamme as 'a major step in extending the reach of vocational education and training', the significance of which will lie not only in its initial four years but in what it can lead to in the longer term if the first four years are well used and vigorously built upon. The three equally important features of the programme are: its 'openness' in aiming to remove barriers to access, its focus on adults at technician and supervisory levels and its collaborative project-based character.

An open learning approach enables participants to learn at a time, place and pace which best meets their needs, and also to have a wider choice in what they study. They may learn at home, at work, in a library, in a classroom or at a training centre. They may want to be able to study at variable times from week to week or from different locations as they move around in their jobs or change their job. They may combine studying on their own with classroom discussions, or with practical tuition at the work place, at a skillcentre or in a local college, or with guided experience and practical assignments. Their learning materials may include printed texts, video or audio tapes, programmed learning packages, computer-assisted learning programmes or national and local television and radio transmissions. Their essential access to counselling and tutorial facilities may be through correspondence, face-to-face discussions, telephone or computer or interactive-video systems. The main feature is that learner needs and circumstances are paramount and determine the system to be used in each instance.

The programme is focused initially on the education, training and re-training of adults in

[1]For further details see COI reference paper *Britain's Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations*, No 140/82.

[2]*Open Tech Task Group Report*. Available free from Open Tech Unit, MSC, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ.

technician and supervisory levels of skill and knowledge in order to meet identified labour market needs and to assist personal development and aspirations. The target client group is not expected to include school-leavers, but people, either in employment or seeking to return to it, who have completed their full-time education or initial vocational training. Through technological or market change, promotion or aspiration, they will be seeking or needing education and training in technical and associated supervisory skills and knowledge.

Technology is seen as central to the programme. Technological change in both products and processes requires rapid adaptation and innovation by people and organisations, and new or updated skills and knowledge; developments such as information technology, computer-assisted and managed learning and new methods of audio-visual communication and presentation, bring new opportunities and challenges to the provision and management of education and training itself.

The Open Tech Programme has the two key tasks of opening or widening access to existing education and training provisions and of making possible new education and training provisions which from the beginning can best be met through open learning. The programme is envisaged as consisting of a planned and co-ordinated range of commissioned projects designed pragmatically to fill gaps in the education system as they may appear nationally, regionally or locally or within different sectors of the economy. Projects may be led by educational, industrial, professional or other organisations or by consortia of different bodies. Some of these organisers will manage projects or contribute to their development and implementation, while others will help to design or produce learning materials, provide tutorial and administrative support or assist with staff development, publicity, the testing of new learning methods or the evaluation of new projects. The early operational projects are likely to include: those covering a whole sector such as construction, engineering or service industries; projects formulated by regional consortia of colleges and industrial firms; some based on particular colleges from among a range of non-engineering subjects at technician level; an employer-led project to meet workforce training and career development needs; and a project with an overall theme such as microelectronics and robotics.

The Open Tech Programme should not displace or replace existing provisions, but should provide a resource which will enhance rather than compete with existing facilities. Employers and training organisations will have an important role in providing access to practical facilities.

Management and Structure

The task group proposes that oversight of the programme should be placed with a steering group for the whole of Great Britain, representing sectors, institutions and organisations with particular interests in the programme. A secretariat and executive arm to back up the steering group is proposed in the form of an Open Tech Unit, under a Director, within the Manpower Services Commission. The Unit will work closely with the Department of Education and Science in England and Wales and the Scottish Education Department in Scotland.

Funding

A provisional allocation of £1 million in 1982-83, rising to an estimated £6-£10 million in 1984-85, has been made by the Manpower Services Commission and agreed by the Government. The task group believes that the best use will be made of the budget in the early years if priority is given to supporting the development of open learning materials and training and developing staff to prepare and use them. In line with the collaborative principles of the programme, and to achieve optimum value for money, financial support for each project should be given only for a clearly defined period. This will make prospective applicants for funds examine carefully whether there is a real need for open learning and also facilitate the maximum impact of the programme budget through 'recycling' of support. There will be many different ways of finding continuing funding for projects, but if they are really meeting a labour market need, it is expected that employers will be prepared to give at least partial financial backing and individuals will make reasonable contributions to the cost of their courses. The task group recognises, however, that in cases where total student numbers are small, employers or others may not be able to underwrite the full expenses of the provision.

The budget of the programme is not intended to be spent directly on supporting students. Most Open Tech students will be employed and can be supported in whole or in part by their employers. Where students attend as individuals or are unemployed, usual sources of finance (such as local authorities or social security benefits) will be available, but students may, in any case, see the prospect of enhanced training as a good investment for the future. To make the programme open geographically steps will need to be taken to improve and co-ordinate payments between local education authorities for students who undertake courses outside their own authority area.

Other Aspects

The report lays stress on the importance of maintaining quality in the programme and outlines a structure for monitoring quality. Collaboration across project boundaries in the development and sharing of materials, tutorial and resource facilities will not be achieved without data and communication links and the task group, therefore, recommends an appropriate and widespread use of national, regional and local media and of the resources and methods of information technology. Linked with the widespread availability of information, an imaginative and carefully phased promotional effort is crucial to the successful operation of the programme; some aspects will lend themselves to national coverage, but a particularly important role is envisaged for local press, television and radio.

In the initial four years of the programme many longer-term outcomes will not be measurable, but

the task group considers it essential that a periodic and cumulative review is made during this period so that informed longer-term decisions can be made on the future of programmes after the first four years and that the experience of the initial period is made use of. The success of the programme might be checked against the following indicators:

a significant increase in the number of adults undergoing training who would otherwise not have been able to do so;

a greater diversity of delivery systems for vocational training;

an increase in collaboration within and between colleges, employers, trade unions and validating bodies, in the provision of training;

a more general acceptance of open learning as an effective means of training at technician and supervisory levels;

a recognition of the Open Tech Programme as a supporter of valuable and high quality training projects;

and a clearer picture of the present and likely future open learning needs for industries, occupations and skills.

To launch the programme the task group would like to see seven or eight major projects commissioned by the end of 1982 to extend significantly provision for technical and supervisory level education and training. The first projects will need to reflect the variety and balance which will characterise the programme as a whole.

Telecommunications Policy

The Government has announced plans to introduce legislation to convert British Telecom from a public corporation into a private sector company. It proposes to offer for sale up to 51 per cent of the shares of the new company, which would represent the largest 'privatisation' scheme so far.

The Government's plans were announced by the Secretary of State for Industry, Mr Patrick Jenkin, in the House of Commons on 19 July (*Hansard*, Vol 28, No 156, cols 23-4). At the same time a White Paper[1] containing Mr Jenkin's statement and some additional background information was issued.

In his statement, Mr Jenkin said that the Government's aim was to promote consumer choice. 'Wherever possible, we want industrial and commercial decisions to be determined by the market and not by the State. We believe that consumer choice and the disciplines of the market lead to more stable prices, improved efficiency and a higher quality of service.' Some progress had already been made in breaking the monopoly in telecommunications following the British Telecommunications Act 1981 (see pp 14-16, 1981). He had licensed the Mercury Consortium to provide a new telecommunications network in competition with British Telecom (see p 86) and he intended to issue in the near future a general licence permitting all *bona fide* value added network service operators to use the British Telecom and Mercury networks. 'The way is now opening', Mr Jenkin continued, 'for the private sector to sell telephone apparatus direct to the public. Liberalisation of telecommunications has started and we intend to see it through.'

The Secretary of State said that the prospect of competition and the advent of new technology were stimulating British Telecom to provide a wider range of competitive services. However, as a nationalised industry, British Telecom did not have direct access to the financial markets. Some 90 per cent of its investment programme (about £2,200 million in 1982-83) was self-financed, which meant that charges to customers covered not only running costs but also 90 per cent of new investment. As a result, charges had risen steeply while investment was insufficient. 'Unless something is done radically to change the capital structure and ownership of British Telecom and to provide a direct spur to efficiency, higher investment could mean still higher charges for the customer. The Government, British Telecom and the general public would find that unacceptable.'

Mr Jenkin said that, at the earliest opportunity, legislation would be introduced to enable British Telecom to be converted into a company, to be known as British Telecommunications plc, operating under the Companies Acts. The legislation would allow the sale of shares in that company to the public and the Government intended, after the next general election, to offer up to 51 per cent of the shares on the market. Once half the shares had been sold, the Government would give up control over the commercial decisions of the company; it would be outside the public sector and its borrowing would no longer be subject to Exchequer control. British Telecom would be subject to proper market disciplines and 'in a position to provide better services which are more responsive to customer needs like those provided by the privately owned telephone companies in the United States'.

The Government believed, Mr Jenkin said, that there would be a need for regulatory arrangements to balance the interests of those supplying telecommunications services, their customers, competitors, employees, investors and suppliers. The legislation would reform arrangements for licensing telecommunications and end British Telecom's exclusive privilege and its role in licensing. Instead there would be a new Office of Telecommunications, modelled on the Office of Fair Trading, under a director general appointed by the Secretary of State for Industry. He or she would have powers similar to those of the Director General of Fair Trading and the aim of the job would be to ensure fair competition and fair prices.

Other features of the legislation would include provisions to ensure that British Telecom employees could acquire shares in the company and

[1] *The Future of Telecommunications in Britain*. Cmnd 8610. HMSO, £1·25. ISBN 0 10 186100 1.

measures to reform the Telegraph Acts, which were passed in the nineteenth century.[1]

Mr Jenkin said that the Government's proposals followed naturally from the liberalising measures on telecommunications passed by the House of Commons in 1981. 'If those who work in telecommunications are to provide the range and quality of service which modern technology now permits, and if they are to do so in competition with each other, it cannot be right that British Telecom should remain subject to the web of government interference and controls which are the inevitable lot of an industry which enjoys the privilege of Exchequer finance. The quality of the service which any enterprise provides depends upon the skills, energy and leadership of the people who work in it. We want to provide those people with the environment – market, financial, legal and structural – which will free them to give of their best. In the view of the Government, that is what the proposed legislation will do.'

Standards

Proposals aimed at increasing the efficiency and strengthening the competitiveness of British industry by adopting a positive policy for standards have been put forward by the Government.

The proposals are set out in a White Paper[2] published on 29 July. Announcing the initiative in a parliamentary reply on 7 June (*Hansard* (*HL*), Vol 431, No 98, written answers, cols 93-4), the Secretary of State for Trade, Lord Cockfield, said that good standards helped firms to achieve the levels of quality, reliability and safety in design and manufacture which were increasingly a prerequisite of successful competition in world markets. By eliminating unnecessary variety, they could reduce manufacturing costs and increase productivity, keeping prices keen.

The Government was committed to enhancing the status of standards in Britain and a central feature of its proposals would be an agreement with the British Standards Institution (BSI) as the national standards-making body. The BSI would be asked to review the corpus of national standards.

For its part the Government would pursue two major objectives: first, to make much wider use of standards and independent certification and approval in its regulatory functions; and secondly, to rely more on standards and independent certification in its procurement activities. The Government would also be asking other public regulatory and purchasing authorities, the nationalised industries and public corporations to relate their requirements to standards. Among other questions to be considered would be the feasibility of a scheme for giving official recognition to certification and approval bodies, possibly backed up by a new national mark.

WHITE PAPER PROPOSALS

The White Paper discusses the importance of standards in world markets, co-ordination between the Government and the BSI, the improvement of the status of standards by regulatory means, public purchasing and quality assurance and certification.

The Importance of Standards

'Success in world markets', the White Paper says, 'increasingly depends on a supplier's ability to satisfy customers on non-price factors, as well as price.' Quality, which embraces the fitness of a product to meet the customer's expectations throughout its life, is often 'the first consideration in purchasing decisions'. Recognised standards 'which reflect the requirements of world markets and not just the particular conditions of the home market', can help firms to produce goods with the quality features that the customer wants, using up-to-date technologies. 'Consistent compliance with these standards can be ensured through the use of quality assurance systems. The products can be tested to the standards and, particularly when compliance is backed up by certification, they will be more easily sold in both domestic and world markets.'

There are also savings in time and costs. 'Reducing the multiplicity of procurement specifications and relating the requirements instead to standards promotes industrial efficiency. It helps build a strong domestic base of more economic production runs, reduces unit costs and promotes consistent product quality; and thereby increases competitiveness. Similarly, quality assurance, by helping to minimise production wastage, cuts costs and increases profitability and productivity.'

The Government's objective of encouraging reliance on standards which hold sway in world markets may mean that a larger number of British Standards should be derived from foreign or international standards, the White Paper says. This would be consistent with Britain's existing obligations to use internationally recognised standards wherever possible and with Britain's commitment to harmonising standards within the European Community. There is no question of reproducing in Britain, however, the legal and institutional arrangements for standards systems which have shown themselves successful in other countries. 'What is needed is to give strength and coherence to the existing national standards system.'

In order to encourage participation by British experts in international standards work, the Department of Trade intends to continue with a scheme of selective assistance for British delegations to international standards meetings when the present scheme, financed by the British Overseas Trade Board, finishes in 1983.

[1] *Access to Telephone Services*. Available free from Telecommunications Division, Department of Industry, Room 311, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6RB.

[2] *Standards, Quality and International Competitiveness*. Department of Trade. Cmnd 8621. HMSO, £2·55. ISBN 0 10 186210 5.

Co-ordination with the BSI

Both the Government and the BSI consider that, if the status of standards in Britain is to be enhanced significantly, there is a need for a more formal and detailed understanding between them on their roles and obligations, the White Paper says. They have agreed to draw up a memorandum of understanding, and a draft version of such an understanding is reproduced as an annexe in the paper.

Attention is drawn in the paper to a need for positive action to persuade industrial interests, particularly purchasers, that they should be adequately represented in the standards-making process; and that having participated in it they should themselves use the standards produced and be willing to see them used for regulatory purposes. The draft memorandum therefore sets out how the Government and the BSI will seek to promote further improvements in industrial representation on the BSI's technical committees. In the first place, the BSI will seek to produce British Standards which not only reflect sound technical and modern practice but also the commercial needs of manufacturers and purchasers. Secondly, the Government realises that it must improve its own representation on technical committees. In particular, government representatives will be expected to comment on how far standards that they have helped to prepare are likely to be acceptable to their departments for regulatory or purchasing purposes.

Promoting the Regulatory Use of Standards

British Standards are developed by a voluntary consensus process. 'There is no requirement on those who participate in their preparation to use them. Generally, their status reflects the accuracy with which they meet the technical requirements of the market place and hence their usefulness to manufacturers and purchasers, who may voluntarily decide to adopt them.'

However, standards can be given additional status if they are used for regulatory purposes. Compliance with specified standards can, for instance, be prescribed as the only way of meeting the requirements of the legislation. Standards may also be referred to on a 'deemed to satisfy' basis, meaning that while compliance with a specified standard would be one way of achieving compliance with the requirements of the legislation, it would be left open for goods not complying with the standard to meet the demands of the legislation in other ways. Less formally, standards may also be referred to in guidance or other documents; in many cases the fact that a producer complies with a standard specified in this way constitutes a *prima facie* defence in court. The advantage of recognising standards in this way is that it gives those who comply with the standards greater certainty of where they stand, legally speaking, while permitting compliance by other routes and thus providing for technological innovation. Standards may also be used informally by enforcement officers in interpreting duties imposed by legislation. Health and Safety Executive inspectors, for example, use product standards informally in providing guidelines on factory visits and as yardsticks against which to measure the design of equipment.

In brief the Government's objective is that 'in future regulatory bodies should, wherever it is necessary to express technical requirements in regulations, do this as far as possible by reference to British Standards', and 'where regulatory bodies use standards less formally, this and the standards used should be made known as widely as possible'.

The White Paper also discusses possible legislative and administrative changes which would contribute to consumer safety and safety at work, and in which references to standards might play a part.

Public Purchasing Policy

'Alongside the use of standards in its regulatory activities, the second major way in which the Government can contribute towards the creation of a strong national system of standards is in its role as a purchaser itself and by the lead it can give to other major public purchasers', the White Paper says. 'It has long been recognised that large-scale purchasers can help to promote industrial efficiency by relating their requirements to standards and making greater use of independent certification.' However, some public purchasers still use their own individual specifications and assessment procedures, adding both to the burdens on suppliers and to purchasers' costs. Thus, if they reduced their own standards-making activities, these public purchasers could not only help to strengthen the BSI as the national forum for standards-making but could obtain resource savings themselves. The Government will therefore: make greater use of standards in its own purchasing requirements; encourage other public purchasers to do the same; draw the attention of other public purchasers to the Department of Trade's recently revised guidelines to government representatives on BSI technical committees; and encourage other public purchasers to follow the Government's example in coming to a formal understanding with the BSI.

Quality Assurance and Certification

The activities of quality assurance and product certification are complementary to standards as a means of strengthening the international competitiveness of British goods, the White Paper says. Quality assurance offers scope for reducing costs and enhancing competitiveness and profitability by reducing materials wastage, lost production time, re-work, extra handling and rejections. By improving customer satisfaction, improved quality and reliability lead to increased sales competitiveness and reduced warranty claims and enable competitive pricing tactics to be employed.

The BSI has developed a standard for quality systems (British Standard 5750, 'Quality Systems', published in 1979) which is being increasingly adopted by leading purchasers in both the public and private sectors as the standard for assessing the quality capability of their suppliers. The Department of Trade is compiling a register

of manufacturers who have been assessed to this standard by public sector authorities or by an independent third-party assessor such as the BSI itself. The register, which it is hoped to publish before the end of 1982, will demonstrate clearly the extent of the commitment by leading purchasers and many manufacturers to the best practices of quality assurance, and should encourage many others involved in purchasing and manufacture to adopt the approach and discipline of BS 5750.

As part of the Government's initiative to promote quality assurance, the Department of Industry will encourage firms seeking official financial assistance to submit projects directed towards this objective. The Department already assists small firms to introduce quality assurance systems through the Manufacturing Advisory Service (see p 211), and improved product quality is also an important criterion when judging projects for support under the Science and Technology Act 1965.

Product certification schemes in their developed form involve the inspection and testing of the product concerned to see that it conforms to the relevant standards, the assessment of an applicant manufacturer's quality assurance scheme and the subsequent re-checking of production and the marketed products to ensure that they continue to meet the required standards.

Two or three hundred individual product categories are covered by certification schemes in Britain, most of them operating under the BSI's Kite-mark or Safety-mark schemes. (These are protected marks used by the BSI to verify the compliance of products with British Standards relating either to quality or safety.) The Government believes that it would be of advantage to industry, particularly exporting industry, if more certification schemes were available and these schemes were used by government departments. The Government is therefore discussing with manufacturers and other interested parties several proposals for product certification and quality assurance schemes. It is also giving urgent consideration to central arrangements for assessing and accrediting certification schemes. A national accreditation scheme would be underpinned by the National Testing Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (NATLAS, see p 183, 1981) and the register of quality assessed manufacturers, mentioned above. However, wider aspects of the scope, management and cost of the unified arrangements need further study, the White Paper says, particularly the question of whether such an agency would be best located within central government or elsewhere. The Government is also considering whether an accreditation scheme could be usefully supplemented by the establishment of a 'national accreditation mark'.

Conclusion

The Government considers that the programme of changes in policy and practice it proposes in the Paper offers a means of achieving 'a strong national policy for standards' which will 'improve the reputation for quality of British goods and thereby support the efforts of British industry in selling to world markets'.

ACARD Report

It is noted in the White Paper that strong and independent support for the Government's proposals is contained in a report[1] published a few weeks before the paper by the Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development (see p 34, 1977). The report summarises the present position on standards in Britain, investigates the industrial resources which are allocated to standards and regulatory work, looks at the practice in other countries, summarises submissions which were invited from interested parties, and presents the results of several product sector studies that were undertaken. Its conclusions are broadly in line with those of the White Paper. Recommendations which are not echoed in the paper include: that a single government department be made responsible for design and standards (at present the Department of Industry sponsors the Design Council and the Department of Trade the BSI); that the Department of Trade should organise a more aggressive pursuance of false claims of compliance with British Standards, and consider legislative changes to make prevention of false claims more effective; and that work on a metrication programme should be renewed.

Shorter Notes

ABOLITON OF HIRE PURCHASE CONTROLS

The Government's decision to abolish all hire purchase controls (which apply to consumer goods) was announced by the Secretary of State for Trade, Lord Cockfield, in the House of Lords on 26 July. Lord Cockfield explained that controls were originally part of a wider apparatus of quantitative controls on credit. (They have been in force, intermittently, since 1942, and have prescribed minimum deposits, maximum repayment periods and minimum advance rental payments.) Changes in the structure of the consumer credit market, however, meant that they now contributed little to overall economic policy. Removal was consistent with government policy of dismantling unnecessary controls in the interests of freeing competition and removing economic distortions. The benefits would be felt by sectors which had been most affected by the regulations, particularly motor cars.

Source: *Hansard* (*HL*), Vol 434, No 132, col 23.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURE

The Government's views on plans for local government expenditure were given in statements to the House of Commons by the Secretary of State

[1] *Facing International Competition. The Impact on Product Design of Standards, Regulations, Certifications and Approvals.* Cabinet Office Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development. HMSO, £5·50. ISBN 0 11 630783 8.

for the Environment, Mr Michael Heseltine, the Secretary of State for Wales, Mr Nicholas Edwards, and the Secretary of State for Scotland, Mr George Younger.

In his announcement on 27 July, Mr Heseltine explained that 'the Government's overriding objective is to reduce the level of current spending by local authorities and thus to secure the low level of rate increases that are now possible and desirable' (*Hansard*, Vol 28, No 162, cols 923-4). He proposed to cut back £201 million of central government grant to English local authorities for 1981-82. The cutback would fall on those authorities which had failed to keep within the Government's targets for public expenditure in 1981-82. Grant in 1982-83 for over-spending authorities would be reduced by £312 million.

Mr Heseltine went on to say that, for 1983-84, local government was being given the earliest possible indications of the Government's plans for local government spending and proposals for the rate support grant settlement. This would give authorities ample time to plan their budgets and make the necessary changes. As had happened for 1982-83, he proposed to give expenditure guidance to individual authorities. There would be two basic rules. Those authorities which were budgeting to meet their targets would be allowed budgets 4 per cent higher than in 1982-83; after allowance for a likely under-spending of 1 per cent in 1982-83, this would represent a 5 per cent increase. For other authorities Mr Heseltine would assume only a rise of 5 per cent over the targets set by the Government for 1982-83. In total this would, however, represent an increase in public expenditure provision of £900 million, or 5 per cent, to £19,500 million and did not, the Secretary of State declared, reflect the Government's view of what ought to be spent. Accordingly, he proposed that the current expenditure total on which grant-related expenditure assessments would be calculated should be substantially lower, at £18,800 million. This was £800 million above the corresponding figure in 1982-83. Authorities that exceeded these guidance figures would risk a more severe loss of grant than in 1982-83. Pointing out that rate levels in each authority depended on levels of both expenditure and grant, he proposed an aggregate Exchequer grant for 1983-84 of £11,800 million on the basis of local authorities spending at the level of their guidance figures. This represented an increase of over £300 million, or nearly 3 per cent, over the 1982-83 settlement and about 53 per cent of relevant local authority expenditure.

In his statement on 28 July (*Hansard*, Vol 28, No 163, col 1061), Mr Edwards, while acknowledging that local authorities in Wales had in general made efforts to keep within the Government's expenditure targets, pointed out that overspending had amounted to some £13 million in 1981-82 and would be about £25 million in 1982-83. He had therefore decided that central government grants should be held back by £2·5 million with respect to 1981-82 and by £5 million in 1982-83, when authorities spending within their target would be exempted from the grant penalty.

Mr Edwards proposed a level of current expenditure by local authorities of £1,205 million in 1983-84. This was a rise of £19 million over original plans and nearly 4 per cent more than the revised figure for 1982-83. As expenditure was likely to fall short of target by about 1 per cent in 1982-83, the increase would be some 5 per cent. The allocation for capital spending in 1983-84 was to be raised by £17 million. Proposed aggregate Exchequer grant of £975 million in 1983-84 would amount to about 70 per cent of relevant local authority expenditure.

Speaking the same day, Mr Younger (*Hansard*, Vol 28, No 163, cols 1074-5) proposed a figure for local authority current expenditure in Scotland in 1983-84 of £2,635 million, which was £120 million higher than the original proposal. Aggregate Exchequer grant would be £1,925 million, about 62 per cent of relevant expenditure and 3·5 per cent higher than in 1982-83. This would be liable to reduction if local authorities were to budget for expenditure significantly above the Government's planning figure.

NATIONAL SAVINGS

In order to ensure that National Savings make a proper contribution to total government funding, two improvements have been announced. First, the maximum holding of the second index-linked issue of National Savings Certificates (see p 237, 1981) has been doubled, from £5,000 to £10,000, with effect from 26 July. Secondly, a National Savings Income Bond, designed for savers seeking a regular monthly income, was offered for sale from 2 August. The annual rate of interest, at present 13·5 per cent, will be varied from time to time to keep it competitive. Interest is taxable although tax is not deductible at source. The bonds are sold in multiples of £1,000 with a minimum holding of £5,000 and a maximum of £200,000. They may be held by any individual, jointly by several people, by trustees or by any corporate body. Monthly income can be paid into a bank account or sent by post. Bonds may be held for a guaranteed initial period of ten years but partial encashment is permitted provided a minimum balance of £5,000 is retained.

Sources: *Hansard*, Vol 28, No 159, written answers, cols 293-4; Department for National Savings press notice, 22.7.82.

WATER INDUSTRY REORGANISATION

The Government has decided to dissolve the National Water Council and to reduce the size of the boards of the regional water authorities. The legislation required for these changes will be introduced at the earliest opportunity.

Announcing this in the House of Commons on 22 July, the Minister for Local Government and Environmental Services, Mr Tom King, said that

the regional water authorities had been set up in 1974 with large memberships, the majority of members being appointed by local authorities in their areas. Contrary to the original intention, consumers had not felt that they were really represented; moreover, large memberships had inhibited efficient decision-taking. The Government had therefore decided, after consultation, to create smaller boards of between nine and 15 members, appointed by Ministers and including executive members on every board. It proposed that county and district councils should have the opportunity to nominate people for some appointments to these boards while, in addition, land drainage and fishery interests would continue to be represented; chairmen and members of the new boards would serve and be paid for fixed terms. Improved arrangements could then be made for consultation with consumers, local authorities and other interested parties. Water authorities had already established various kinds of liaison arrangements at divisional level, and the Government intended to build on these.

In considering the structure of the water authorities, Mr King said, the Government had also examined their relationship with the National Water Council, which played a valuable role following reorganisation in 1974 in assisting the new authorities and helping to represent them to Government. They were now fully established and the Government had developed a more direct relationship with the individual authorities; it therefore believed that they were able to carry out their responsibilities without an additional central statutory body and the National Water Council would accordingly be dissolved. The Water Space Amenity Commission would also be dissolved.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 27, No 148, cols 293-4.

COMPUTER-AIDED DESIGN AND TEST EQUIPMENT

The Government is to extend its three-year campaigns to increase awareness in industry of computer-aided design and computer-aided manufacture (CADCAM) and of computer-aided design, manufacture and test (CADMAT) in the electronics industry. It is making £12 million available over the next two years in the form of capital grants of up to one-third of the cost of computer equipment including peripheral hardware and software but excluding production equipment. The CADCAM campaign began in January 1982 and the CADMAT campaign in February 1982.

Support is intended primarily for new users and will also be available for the integration of software packages and associated peripheral devices into an existing computer installation. External services such as consultancy and operator training will also qualify.

Announcing the scheme, the Minister for Information Technology, Mr Kenneth Baker, said that the Government was aware that many companies were having to restrict their investment in new capital equipment and that the effects of this were particularly significant when techniques new to a particular organisation were under consideration. It had therefore concluded that it should provide, in the short term, positive encouragement for investment in these areas. Mr Baker also announced that 13 firms had agreed to share their experience in CADCAM by providing demonstration facilities and that four others had established the first four CADMAT demonstration centres.

Source: Department of Industry press notice, 19.7.82.

MICROELECTRONICS IN EDUCATION

The Government is to make available up to £9 million to provide microcomputers for every primary school on the same basis as the existing scheme for secondary schools (see pp 117-18 and 336, 1981). The new scheme will operate from 1 October 1982 until the end of 1984. Some 27,000 maintained and independent schools will be eligible for 'pound-for-pound' support.

Announcing the scheme at a press conference in London on 16 July, the Prime Minister, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, expressed the hope that the scheme would result in every primary school having its own microcomputer and giving young people the experience they needed with the technology of their future working and daily lives. She added that more than 80 per cent of the maintained and independent secondary schools in Britain were already taking part in the scheme for secondary schools. 'We know how enthusiastically and skilfully young children can use technology in problem-solving and as an aid to learning across the curriculum. Our future prosperity as a nation depends upon encouraging this enthusiasm to flourish from the earliest days at school', she said.

Schools and local education authorities can choose from three packages of equipment which have been selected on grounds of technological and educational merit with the help of teachers and advisers, in close liaison with the education departments. The packages include the microcomputer itself, a cassette recorder, a visual display unit and an initial teacher training pack; each package is therefore ready for use as a complete system.

Speaking at the press conference, the Minister for Industry and Information Technology, Mr Kenneth Baker, said that the scheme would also help to open up the important educational market to manufacturers of hardware and software. He was pleased that British manufacturers were producing equipment with the qualities needed for effective educational use.

Sources: Department of Industry leaflet *Micros in Primary Schools*; Department of Industry press notice, 16.7.82.

RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

The Government has published a White Paper[1] on radioactive waste management which reports on the present position and sets out its priorities for further action.

Introducing the White Paper in the House of Commons on 22 July, the Minister for Local Government and Environmental Services, Mr Tom King, said that the Government attached the highest importance to the safe management of radioactive wastes. As a result of research undertaken in Britain and other countries over the past five years, the Government was satisfied that all the wastes currently envisaged could be managed and disposed of in acceptable ways. The main task was to identify the most appropriate method for each category of waste and then to ensure its efficient implementation. In this the Government would continue to be advised by the independent radioactive waste management advisory committee, set up by the previous Government following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution (see pp 237-9, 1977).

The Commission also identified the need for an executive organisation to develop and manage radioactive waste disposal facilities and to accept solid waste from those who created it, Mr King said. The Government had now reached agreement with the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), British Nuclear Fuels Limited (BNFL) and the electricity generating boards that they would set up forthwith such an executive, to be called the Nuclear Industry Radioactive Waste Executive (NIREX). In the first instance, NIREX would take responsibility for intermediate-level wastes. It would also take over responsibility as from 1983 for the sea-disposal operations for low-level waste. It would have a staff at Harwell (Oxfordshire) provided by the UKAEA on a repayment basis, and would be supervised by a directorate made up of senior representatives of the constituent bodies. The costs of disposal operations, which were expected to be roughly £65 million over the next 10 years, would be met by the producers of the waste. The Government believed that NIREX was the most suitable form of organisation for these present tasks. Its establishment in no way affected the clear responsibilities of the Secretary of State for the Environment together with the Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales, who were responsible for the overall strategy on waste management and, in conjunction with the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, retained regulatory powers to ensure that NIREX maintained the necessary standards. The new executive would make periodic reports to the Secretaries of State.

Mr King pointed out that radioactive wastes varied very widely in radioactivity and toxicity. Work was proceeding on vitrification plant for the small quantities of high-level heat-generating liquid waste. The solid blocks thus produced would then be stored for a likely period of at least 50 years, until the radioactivity and heat generation had declined substantially. Further research would meanwhile be undertaken to help to identify the most suitable of the available methods for longer-term management. The first main task of NIREX would be to satisfy the need for early development of land disposal facilities for intermediate-level waste, employing existing technology. For low-level wastes, satisfactory methods of disposal were already in use, and the advisory committee had confirmed that these should continue to be used subject to the continuing monitoring of appropriate controls. In the case of liquid discharges from the Sellafield (formerly Windscale) works of BNFL, which had been reduced substantially in recent years, a new and more stringent authorisation would be issued after the treatment plant, now under construction, came into operation.

Mr King concluded by making two further points. First, he confirmed the industry's full acceptance that the cost of waste management measures had to be met by it and be reflected in its accounting practices; and secondly, he affirmed the need to secure public confidence in the management of both existing radioactive wastes and those that would arise. The Government attached great importance to keeping the public properly informed and would seek to ensure that this was done at all stages.

Source: *Hansard*, Vol 28, No 159, cols 556-7.

[1] *Radioactive Waste Management*. Cmnd 8607. HMSO, £2·70. ISBN 0 11 186070 6.

DOCUMENTATION

Government and Administration

Inquiry into Civil Service Pay: Report. Report of an independent inquiry, set up in December 1981 and chaired by Sir John Megaw, to make recommendations on the future arrangements for determining the pay of non-industrial civil servants. Among its 60 recommendations, the report suggests the introduction of a system of 'informed collective bargaining' to take account of a variety of different kinds of relevant information; and the establishment of an independent board which would employ management consultants to collect and analyse the data to be provided to the negotiating parties.

Vol I: The Inquiry's Findings. Cmnd 8590. HMSO, £7·50. ISBN 0 10 185900 7.

Vol II: Research Studies. Cmnd 8590-1. HMSO, £9·35. ISBN 0 10 185901 5.

Immigration from the Indian Sub-Continent. Fifth Report from the Home Affairs Committee of the House of Commons, Session 1981-82.

Vol I. Report. HMSO, £4·35. ISBN 0 10 008292 0.

Vol II. Evidence and Appendices. HMSO, £9·25. ISBN 0 10 008302 1.

Falkland Islands: Britain's Search for a Negotiated Settlement. COI, No 170/82. (French, Portuguese and Spanish editions in preparation.)

External Affairs and Defence

Ministry of Defence Organisation and Procurement. Second Report from the House of Commons Defence Committee, Session 1981-82.

Vol I. Report. HMSO, £4·80. ISBN 0 10 008492 3.

Vol II. Minutes of Evidence and Appendices. HMSO, £14·25. ISBN 0 10 008502 4.

NATO Communiqués 1981. Texts of communiqués and declarations. Issued after meetings held at ministerial level during 1981. Available free from NATO Information Service, 1110 Brussels.

Allied Forces in Germany. Observations presented by the Secretary of State for Defence on the First Report from the House of Commons Defence Committee (published in March 1982), Session 1981-82. Cmnd 8571. HMSO, £1·25. ISBN 0 10 18710 1.

Agreement between . . . the United Kingdom . . . and the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic on the Settlement of Certain Outstanding Claims and Financial Issues. Prague, 29 January 1982, with amending Exchange of Notes . . . 2 February 1982. Cmnd 8557. HMSO, £2·55. ISBN 0 10 185570 2.

The British Council Annual Report 1981-82 (see p 266). HMSO/British Council, £1·70. ISBN 0 901618 79 9.

Economic and Scientific Affairs

Guide to Official Statistics. No 4. 1982. Central Statistical Office. HMSO, £25. ISBN 0 11 630782 X.

Cash Limits 1981-82 Provisional Outturn (and 1980-81 Outturn). Cmnd 8615. HMSO, £2·95. ISBN 0 10 186150 8.

Bank of England. Report and Accounts for the year ended 28 February 1982. Available free from the Bank of England, Threadneedle Street, London EC2R 8AH.

Committee on Invisible Exports. Annual Report 1981-82. Available free from the Committee on Invisible Exports, Seventh Floor, The Stock Exchange, London EC2N 1HH.

World Invisible Trade. June 1982. Contains figures for 1980 and some comparison of trends since 1969. In 1980 Britain was second only to the United States in terms of its net receipts from invisible transactions (excluding transfers and miscellaneous government transactions) and third (behind the United States and France) in terms of gross receipts. Committee on Invisible Exports, Seventh Floor, The Stock Exchange, London EC2N 1HH. £6.

Manpower Services Commission Manpower Review 1982. Available free from the MSC, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ.

Open Tech Task Group Report (see p 269). Available free from Open Tech Unit, Manpower Services Commission, Moorfoot, Sheffield S1 4PQ.

Annual Report of the Director General of Fair Trading 1981. Office of Fair Trading. HMSO, £7·05. IS8N 0 10 243482 4.

Companies in 1981. The report notes that the number of new company registrations increased again in 1981, with some 28,000 more companies on the register at the end of the year than in 1980. The total number of companies (788,846) was nearly 50 per cent higher than in 1971 (527,640). Department of Trade. HMSO, £4·30. IS8N 0 11 513541 3.

8ritain's Enterprise Zones and Urban Development Corporations. COI, No 140/82 (French and Spanish editions in preparation).

British Shipbuilders. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. HMSO, £2·50. IS8N 0 906343 03 7.

8ritish Steel Corporation. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. HMSO, £1. ISBN 0 901894 58 3.

8ritish Steel Corporation. Observations by the Government on the Fourth Report of the House of Commons Industry and Trade Committee, Session 1981-82. HMSO, £1·25. IS8N 0 10 249182 8.

Mineral Exploration and Investment Grants Act 1972: Tenth Annual Report by the Department of Industry for the period 1 April 1981 to 31 March 1982. HMSO, £1·25. IS8N 0 10 249282 4.

8ritish Gas Corporation. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available from HMSO, £2. IS8N 0 903545 30 6.

National Gas Consumers' Council. Annual Report 1981-82. Available free from the NGC, Fifth Floor, Estate House, 130 Jermyn Street, London SW1Y 4UJ. IS8N 0 904409 08 2.

National Coal 8oard. Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available from the Purchasing and Contracts Office, National Coal 8oard, Hobart House, Grosvenor Place, London SW1X 7AE. £2·75. IS8N 0 906394 07 4.

The Electricity Council. Annual Report 1981-82. Available free from the Public and Overseas Relations Department, Electricity Council, 30 Millbank, London SW1P 4RD. IS8N 0 85188 088 6.

The Electricity Council. Statement of accounts and statistics 1981-82. Available from HMSO, £2·25. IS8N 0 85188 089 4.

Central Electricity Generating Board. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available from the Press and Publicity Office, CEG8, Sudbury House, 15 Newgate Street, London EC1A 7AU. £2. IS8N 0 902543 68 7. Detailed statistics are given in *CEGB Statistical Yearbook 1981-82.* Available free from the CEG8. IS8N 0 902543 69 5.

North of Scotland Hydro-Electric 8oard. Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available free from the 8oard, 16 Rothesay Terrace, Edinburgh EH3 7SE.

South of Scotland Electricity 8oard. Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available from the Board, Cathcart House, Glasgow G44 48E, £1·50.

Sizewell B. A review by HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate of the pre-construction safety report. The review presents a summary of the position reached by April 1982 of the Inspectorate's work in assessing the Central Electricity Generating Board's pre-construction safety report for its proposed pressurised water reactor at Sizewell (Suffolk). The Inspectorate's general conclusion is that a satisfactory design is achievable and can be developed so as to meet the safety objectives. The review has been prepared primarily to be of assistance at the public inquiry to begin in January 1983. Health and Safety Executive. HMSO, £5·50. IS8N 0 11 883652 8.

Transport in London. Fifth Report from the House of Commons Transport Committee, Session 1981-82.

Vol I. Report, Appendices and Minutes of Proceedings. HMSO, £7·75. IS8N 0 10 008912 7.

Vol II. Minutes of Evidence (Session 1980-81). HMSO, £12·40. IS8N 0 10 288382 3.

Vol III. Minutes of Evidence (Session 1981-82) and Appendices. HMSO, £13·15. IS8N 0 10 288582 6.

8ritish Airports Authority. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available free from the 8AA, Gatwick Airport, Gatwick, West Sussex RH6 0HZ. IS8N 0 903460 25 4.

Civil Aviation Authority. Annual Report and Accounts 1981-82. Available from the CAA, PO Box 41, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire. £3·50. IS8N 0 86039 160 4.

The Post Office. Report and Accounts 1981-82. The Post Office. Available from HMSO, £1·50. IS8N 0 946165 04 1.

The Future of Telecommunications in 8ritain (see p 271). Cmnd 8610. HMSO, £1·25. IS8N 0 10 186100 1.

Access to Telephone Services (see p 272). Available free from Telecommunicatiòns Division, Department of Industry, Room 311, Ashdown House, 123 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6R8.

Standards, Quality and International Competitiveness (see p 272). Cmnd 8621. Department of Trade. HMSO, £2·55. ISBN 0 10 186210 5.

Facing International Competition. The Impact on Product Design of Standards, Regulations, Certifications and Approvals (see p 274). Cabinet Office

Advisory Council for Applied Research and Development. HMSO, £5·50. ISBN 0 11 630783 8.

Radioactive Waste Management (see p 277). Cmnd 8607. HMSO, £2·70. ISBN 0 11 186070 6.

Social and Cultural Affairs

Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary 1981. HMSO, £6·65. ISBN 0 10 246382 4.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland. Report for the Year ended 31 December 1981. Cmnd 8575. HMSO, Edinburgh, £5·10. ISBN 0 10 185750 0.

Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire Services 1981. Deals with events associated with fire brigades in England and Wales. Cmnd 8597. HMSO, £4·40. ISBN 0 10 185970 8.

The Housing Corporation. Report 1981-82. Available free from the Housing Corporation, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 0BN.

Shared Ownership: A Stepping Stone to Home Ownership. Report on a Survey of Local Authority Shared Ownership Schemes, by Patrick Allen. HMSO, £4·30. ISBN 0 11 751619 8.

Ancient Monuments Board for England: 28th Annual Report 1981. HMSO, £5·25. ISBN 0 10 245882 0.

The South Bank Arts Complex. COI, No 167/82.

© *Crown copyright 1982*

Printed in England by Brown Knight & Truscott Ltd
and Published by
HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
£1.35 net

Annual subscription including indices and postage £20.42

Dd 8298582 K8 AUGUST/1982
ISBN 0 11 726754 6 Vol. 12 No. 8
ISSN 0039—6214